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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 008535

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE

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SUBJECT: TURKEY: POSSIBLE VISIT BY SWEDISH FM COULD BOOST  
AK'S HUMAN RIGHTS IMAGE

Classified by Acting Political Counselor Nicholas S. Kass.  
Reason: 1.5(b)(d).

1. (C) Anne Dismoor, Swedish Ambassador to Turkey, told poloff at a November 20 reception that she was hopeful Swedish FM Lindh would visit Turkey soon. According to Dismoor, Lindh canceled her trip last year after GOT officials stated she would have to cancel a planned visit to Diyarbakir, a southeastern province under a state of emergency, due to the possibility of "bad press." Dismoor commented that during a meeting last week AK Party Chairman Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed puzzlement over why Lindh felt forced to cancel her trip and stated she should be able to visit Diyarbakir. Erdogan further indicated that Lindh would be given all accommodations should she choose to visit Turkey. Dismoor said Erdogan was scheduled to go to Sweden next November 27 and implied plans for a visit to Turkey by Lindh may be discussed.

2. (C) Comment: Sweden has at times been among the leading critics of Turkey's human rights record. A visit to the troubled southeast by Lindh at this time would highlight the AK Party's efforts to portray itself as willing to break with the past on this issue. After assuming office, Interior Minister Aksu immediately issued a message to all governors stressing the importance of combating torture, abduction, excessive force, and extrajudicial killing. The AK party also elevated the status of human rights in the Cabinet by appointing a Deputy PM, Ertugrul Yalcinbayir, as Minister for Human Rights; the GOT had previously assigned a State Minister to this role.  
PEARSON